



**MINUTES OF THE
FEDERAL INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (FICEMS)
Ambulance Safety Subcommittee**

DATE & TIME:	September 4, 2003 9:00 a.m.
LOCATION:	National Emergency Training Center (NETC) Building S, Room 113 16825 South Seton Avenue Emmitsburg, Maryland 21727
MEMBER AGENCY REPRESENTATION:	Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Mr. Gordon Sachs United States Fire Administration (USFA) Mr. John Brasko United States Fire Administration Mr. Bill Troup United States Fire Administration
	Department of Agriculture No Representation
	Federal Communications Commission No Representation
	Department of Defense (DOD) No Representation
	General Services Administration (GSA) Mel Globerman

	Engineering Division, FCAE
	Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Ms. Nancy Romano AS Subcommittee Chair National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Mr. Paul Moore National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
	Department of Interior No Representation
	Department of Transportation (DOT) Mr. Dave Bryson National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
	Department of Veteran Affairs No Representation
	Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) No Representation
	Department of Labor No Representation
OTHER FEDERAL ATTENDEES:	Department of Commerce (DOC) No Representation
	Department of Justice (DOJ) No Representation
OTHER ATTENDEES PRIVATE SECTOR:	American Ambulance Association (AAA) No Representation
	American Medical Response Mr. Ron Thackery
	American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM)

	Mr. Pete Chambers
	Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Captain Christine Woodard
	Little Rock, AR, Metropolitan Emergency Medical Systems (MEMS) Mr. Jon Swanson
	National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) Mr. Joe Robison
	VFIS Mr. Richard Patrick
DIAL-IN PARTICIPANTS:	Salt Lake City, UT Dr. Jeff Clawson
	Montgomery County, MD, Department of Fire & Rescue Services Buddy Ey

Ambulance Safety Subcommittee Chairperson Ms. Nancy Romano called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

I. WELCOME:

Mr. Gordon Sachs welcomed participants on behalf of USFA. He noted that he would be taking on the duties of Mr. Jeff Dyar, including FICEMS-related duties, due to Mr. Dyar's extended sick leave. He then turned the chair of the meeting to Ms. Nancy Romano, NIOSH.

Ms. Romano welcomed everyone to the meeting.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Romano hopes to continue meeting at this 9:00 a.m. time slot, and would like participants to submit to her names of those who could contribute to this subcommittee.

There was a motion to approve minutes from July and it was unanimously approved.

III. EMS INJURIES

Sandy McMinn was scheduled to give a presentation, but was not present due to budget cuts.

IV. ESTABLISH OBJECTIVES FOR THE SUBCOMMITTEE

Ms. Romano recapped the March meeting with regards to objectives mentioning the following areas:

- Provide safe environment
- Driver training
- Priority dispatch & response

Mr. Pete Chambers suggested the subcommittee focus on testing of ambulance crashes since there is already an ongoing project relating to this topic.

Ms. Romano commented that NIOSH does have an ongoing project dealing with ambulance crashes, but the subcommittee doesn't want to make that project the sole focus.

Mr. Mel Globerman mentioned that the subcommittee should try to take advantage of what's already there as far as ambulance safety. For example, seatbelts, short stops, other passive devices that are proven to work, etc. He mentioned that it's an awareness issue as well as driver training. Mr. Globerman felt that the return on

investment would be significant, and that the insurance industry would verify that based on claims, driver training improves accident rates.

Ms. Romano indicated that NIOSH is trying to make this scientific, and will have some hard facts to present to the public regarding ambulance safety in the future.

Mr. Paul Moore stated that we have several good driver training programs, but wondered if we have hard data on how well these programs work.

Mr. Globerman reiterated that the insurance industry will say that driver training cuts accident rates.

Mr. Ron Thackery suggested looking at states that require the emergency driver course to see that the collision rates would be fewer. He also mentioned looking outside the ambulance industry at commercial vehicles – these would show that driver training improves the operation of an EMS or other vehicle.

Mr. Chambers commented that emergency vehicles represent a different data set (than garbage truck drivers, for example.) He mentioned that it's the public safety community that we're talking about. Accidents occur. Mr. Chambers suggested we look at what type of training gets the best response. What cultural change needs to happen to enforce that training? How do you train someone to rearrange their priorities to deal with an emergency situation? Mr. Chambers mentioned that the insurance industry is not willing to share this type of proprietary information.

Mr. Globerman posed the question: Do we wait to get the scientific data or do we do something? Should we draw conclusions from data based on where accidents happen versus where the training is?

Mr. Chambers responded that someone needs to put the information on the table – he gets frustrated because he's not seeing the data.

Mr. David Bryson suggested looking at trends of public safety providers that have been killed in accidents. Law enforcement is having a huge problem with people dying in crashes, and there are trends. Mr. Bryson added that we should focus in on ambulance safety – it's not just driver training.

Mr. Jeff Clawson commented that there is a difference between a series of mechanisms to create change. We have a culture of response that needs to be addressed from the top down. Mr. Clawson continued that this culture is different across respondents (police vs. fireman; also, rural vs. urban.) This calls for a national reporting system, which we do not currently have, so we don't have good information.

Mr. Globerman agreed that you do need a culture change, and commented that there's a lot of exposure to catastrophe when an ambulance has lights & sirens with a stable patient. He restated the need to start at training.

Mr. Jon Swanson discussed installing black box recorders in ambulances, some of which have a system that will warn you if you're driving too fast or take a corner too fast, etc. Mr. Swanson stated that EVOC training is not enough and agreed that there should be a cultural training too. We should learn from success stories of bad crashes with minor injuries, not just to see what failed.

Mr. Thackery endorsed the concept that vehicle safety should be the most preeminent goal of the subcommittee. He suggested that the following categories need to be addressed:

1. Method for reporting & collecting data
2. Driver selection
3. Method of identifying driver behaviors
4. Looking at technology and how it can improve driving
5. Vehicle design
6. Identify standards with respect to the culture in the industry – behavior of leaders
7. System design – priority dispatch, types of calls we respond to w/ sirens/lights
8. Method for being able to get the message out – things that work & don't work

Mr. Chambers discussed the objective of how government agencies can share data and coming up with a protocol to use within this group. He mentioned that the first step is to learn how to talk to each other and learn the vocabulary to communicate in an effective way. Why reinvent the wheel if there's information out there that we can pull in from each other?

Mr. Moore added that the data doesn't reside at a federal level. It could but that would be a large project. Mr. Moore continued saying that the data is more on the level of American Medical Response, etc.

Mr. Clawson mentioned that one problem with collecting data is the culture because data is kept under wraps and hidden. Getting the data is going to be virtually impossible because it's hidden and because no one wants to talk about it. Mr. Clawson added there should be federal enforcement through law enforcement to get data because these departments have some sort of accident report form on file.

Mr. Chambers agreed. He added that the data is hidden deliberately because no one wants to air their dirty laundry. We need to go out to the Ambulance Associations and reach those that can reach the states, etc. Mr. Chambers thought that law enforcement is a good method because there is an officer taking down information – not only reports, but pictures, numbers, speeds, measurements, etc.

Mr. Globerman commented that the purpose here is to avoid duplication of efforts and, ideally, have every accident recorded with all needed data. He suggested approaching NHTSA and the full committee because the true scientific date just doesn't exist.

Ms. Romano interjected that the group needed to wrap things up to stay on schedule.

Mr. Rick Patrick noted that the agencies are saying and doing the same thing but not sharing what they're doing. He stated that objective # 1 needs to be to communicate the data you have with each other – this is necessary to go any further. He added that if we don't have data, everything else is anecdotal. Mr. Patrick acknowledged that there are justifiable reasons why that data is not released, but he believes that it can be released with some federal influence on the insurance industry. Mr. Patrick also suggested having an independent nationally recognized university as a researcher, and though it's going to take years to do research, you can't let it rest. He mentioned that we do have data on things that do work such as education, training, and risk control measures; black box systems; etc. Mr. Patrick noted that the human factor is the bottom line, not the engineering of the ambulance itself. He felt that this is an upper management issue more than an operational issue by the users of the vehicles.

Mr. Thackery stated that there's a lot of data from private ambulance companies, and we need someone to take the data and use it for the purpose of improvement not to hang someone out to dry.

Mr. Globerman inquired if the implication is that the data would be public and could there be no lawsuits against any companies/organizations/people?

Mr. Patrick restated the importance of enlisting a 3rd party university research team to conduct this type of research based on data anonymously based on demographics.

Mr. Chambers commented that if NIOSH had a project to visit ambulance companies to see what their records show, they'd have the data.

Mr. Paul Moore suggested that the subcommittee identify all the data sources that people know about or have access to – this was added as an **ACTION ITEM**.

Mr. Patrick commented that there probably are universities that have the funding to do this research, but they're just looking for some support.

Ms. Romano suggested that the subcommittee submit a list of objectives by the next meeting. An **ACTION ITEM** was added for the group to review the items discussed today to help determine the objectives.

Mr. Chambers suggested that the group submit ideas electronically and that someone tabulate ideas prior to next meeting via email.

Ms. Romano responded that the minutes will be emailed along with a voting form for objectives to tally prior to the next subcommittee meeting.

Mr. Chambers added that we should give a 2 minute briefing in the main FICEMS meeting and send minutes to everyone to see what responses we get for the objectives.

Mr. David Bryson would like to give a brief presentation on his research at the next subcommittee meeting. This was added as an **ACTION ITEM**.

Mr. Ron Thackery would like David Bryson to distribute a list of websites. Mr. Bryson will pass on any links he has to be included in the minutes.

IV. ACTION ITEMS REVIEW

The following Action Items were reviewed from June meeting:

1. Contact Dr. Clawson – Rick Patrick did that and Dr. Clawson on the phone today. Will work with Dr. Clawson for the December meeting.
2. Bill Troup was to gather information about the ambulance driver simulator in New York. Bill has some materials from his contact and Bill will get the website and put in the minutes for people to look at on their own time. The web page for the Ambulance Driver Simulator researched by Mr. Troup is http://www.faac.com/Driving_Simulators.htm.
3. Susan McHenry was to share info from NHTSA on preemptive system information. However since she is not present, Mr. Patrick agreed to give a brief presentation on this for December. This was added as a new **ACTION ITEM**.
4. Joe Robison was to check to see if there's any type of data collection with his agency, but has not found anything yet. Joe will follow up and present any information he finds at the next meeting. This was added as a new **ACTION ITEM**.
5. Captain Christine Woodard will do a brief presentation in December. This was added as a new **ACTION ITEM**.
6. If anyone knows of any other committees, meetings, conferences that might be beneficial please share details with other subcommittee members.

VI. UPDATE OF MEMBERS' INVOLVEMENT IN AMBULANCE SAFETY PROJECTS

Bill Troup – USFA & Dept of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Joint Program Office are in the process of completing the Fire Service Emergency

Vehicle Safety Initiative Project that looks to reduce emergency vehicle crashes as well as emergency responders being struck by on the roadway. EMS agencies, including the American Ambulance Association (AAA) was represented in Dallas along with the fire service organizations, the insurance industry, manufacturers of apparatus, etc. The final report on this project is in draft currently being reviewed and will hopefully be available for the December FICEMS meeting.

Mr. Thackery – AMA – His organization has put together a draft document as well, and Mr. Thackery would like to send it out via email to the group.

ACTION ITEM: Send out the document that Mr. Thackery was talking about. Steve Homoki will send out emails to all so they have their own addresses. Mr. Thackery will forward the document to Nancy, and the committee should comment on the document.

Mr. Thackery has a 15 minute video to show at a meeting about a fatal crash as a tool to educate EMS. **ACTION ITEM:** Show this video at the next meeting.

Mr. Swanson mentioned that he has data on response times before and after the black box systems, and will have more thorough data by December. **ACTION ITEM:** Mr. Swanson will give a presentation on his research with black box systems at the December meeting.

VII. EMS-LAS VEGAS EXPO PRESENTATION UPDATE

Mr. Globerman gave a summary of his presentation that he will use at the conference in Las Vegas.

Mr. Chambers announced that ASTM will be meeting at the expo in Las Vegas and if anyone's interested to please check the conference agenda for meeting times and locations.

VIII. NEW ACTION ITEMS

The following are new action items:

- Mr. Paul Moore suggested that the subcommittee identify all the data sources that people know about or have access to.
- Ms. Romano suggested that the subcommittee submit a list of objectives by the next meeting, and that the group vote and review items discussed today to help determine the objectives.
- Mr. David Bryson will give a brief presentation on his research at the next subcommittee meeting.
- Mr. Patrick agreed to give a brief presentation on information from NHTSA on preemptive system for the December meeting.
- Joe Robison will follow up to see if there's any type of data collection with his agency and present any information he finds at the next meeting.

- Captain Christine Woodard will do a brief presentation in December.
- Mr. Thackery will show a 15 minute video at the next meeting about a fatal crash as a tool to educate EMS.
- Mr. Swanson will give a presentation on his research with black box systems at the December meeting.
- Send out all AS member email/contact information to all AS members.

IX. SET NEXT MEETING AGENDA

Ms. Romano will set up the agenda for the December meeting according to objectives and action items.

After brief discussion of the new earlier meeting time, the group decided to leave the December meeting time at 9:00 a.m.

X. ADJOURNMENT

With no further comments, Ms. Romano made a motion to adjourn. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.